THE

CHARACTER

OF THE

PRETENDER.

By his SECRETARY,

Saint-Felix (Henry)

The late Lord BOLINGBROKE.

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

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THE CHARACTER OF THE PRETENDER.

TIS an old obſervation, That looſe papers reſemble the Sibyl's leaves; their contents, if oraculous, ſpread far and wide, are ſooneſt read and leaſt forgot. For this reaſon, among many, the following pages have been extracted from the bulky writings of the late lord Bolingbroke; and they are now preſented to the public, chiefly for the ſake of what they ſay, not for the ſake of the perſon who ſaid them.

Lord Bolingbroke is gone to his grave; and perhaps it might have been wiſhed, that ſome of his philoſophical manuſcripts had gone with him: but his political writings muſt ſtand the teſt, and remain the bleſſing of Britain for many ages. Theſe are the writings we have now to do with, and from theſe, particularly his letter to Sir William Wyndham, the following extracts are taken.

It is well known, That at the time when JAMES the VII. abdicated the throne, and threw away three kingdoms for the Maſs, he carried an infant along with him, who, in later times, was juſtly named the PRETENDER.

This infant was ſaid to have been born the 10th of June 1688, and therefore was but a few months old, when his majeſty tranſported him; ſo that in the year 1715, when the firſt attempt upon Britain was made in his favour, he was in the flower of life, from 27 to 28 years of age. Before this time various conjectures had been formed of his character; conjectures more various than common; his

his caſe was ſingular: the character of a ſon is oſten preſumed from the character of a father; but here was a ſon whoſe father was not certainly known.

With a character thus involved in cloud and obſcurity, lord Bolingbroke entered into his ſervice: that he engaged in his ſervice is true; that he ſerved him unfaithfully is falſe. He ſoon diſcovered his error, and at the ſame time diſcovered the character of the perſon he had to deal with; and theſe diſcoveries produced, what they could not fail to produce, a deſire of being reconciled to the wiſe and prudent adminiſtration of his late Majeſty. Reconciled he was; and from that time to his death, he continued to write in ſupport of that conſtitution he had formerly, thro' miſtake, ſought to deſtroy.

The Jacobites, a generation of men poſitive to a miracle, were long perſuaded, That lord Bolingbroke was ſtill of their opinion; and ſo long as he kept under the diſguiſe of Caleb d'Anvers, or Humphrey Oldcaſtle, they read his works and extoll'd them. They repreſented him, as an honeſt man, and as a perſon worthy of credit. They imagined ſomething very fine was at the bottom, and expected that he would in due time ſignalize himſelf by ſome mighty exploit in favour of his old maſter.

The year 1745 came; the young Pretender landed; lord Bolingbroke ſat quiet; opportunity ſlipt away; the rebels were defeat; the Pretender fled; and the hopes of his followers were diſappointed. At laſt, in the year 1753, appeared lord Bolingbroke's letter to Sir William Wyndham, and in that letter appear many ſtrong facts, which ſeemed to have had mighty influence on his lordſhip's former conduct. Some of theſe facts, ſtrong and ſtriking, make the ſubject of this pamphlet.

If the Jacobites are convinced, that lord Bolingbroke died in the faith of their opinions, they muſt admit his teſtimony as to theſe facts to be true: 'tis the teſtimony of a man againſt himſelf, which of all others is the ſtrongeſt. But if they believe that his lordſhip was an apoſtate to Whigry, ſtill they muſt allow the facts he mentions as worthy of the higheſt credit, ſince on the truth of them he builds his apology for having deſerted a cauſe which they

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account sacred; and which facts they had both desire and opportunity to contradict, if possible.

This much it was thought needful to say on the subject of lord Bolingbroke's character as a writer, and particularly as the author of the above-mentioned letter. With respect to the extracts from that letter, which follow, they consist mostly of facts, and facts need no apology. They are facts which past under his lordship's eye, were consistent with his knowledge, and in the event whereof he was greatly interested; the truth of them is asserted in a letter from his lordship to Sir William Wyndham, where the greatest candour was required: they were communicated to many of the party, as the reason of his lordship's conduct: they have never yet been in any article contradicted; and must therefore fall upon the mind of every attentive reader, with all that weight and force which in themselves, attended with these circumstances, they carry along with them.

The editor has published them in this manner, in justice to the revolution settlement, and in compassion to his deluded countrymen, who, notwithstanding repeated fruitless attempts, do still continue attach'd to the cause of a POPISH PRETENDER.

The doctrine of a divine indefeasible right being too long exploded to afford a refuge for Jacobitism, its abetters have had recourse to the character and promises of their prince; "A prince become wise by sufferings, willing to amend the "errors of former reigns, and give full security for future "conduct *." This disguise, thinner than a cob-web, has not, however, failed to blind the minds of some well-meaning people. Trusting to this broken reed, not a few embarked in the rebellion 1745, and don't seem as yet sufficiently apprised of their folly.

Against this delusion lord Bolingbroke has provided the proper antidote, the character of the PRETENDER: a true Catholic, whose love to God is founded on fear of the horns of the Devil, and whose love to men consists in killing the body for the good of the soul: too honest to engage for the security of our constitution in plain and ample terms; and yet, too insincere to be trusted in what he

* See the Pretender's Manifestos in the 1745.

he hath promised: the tool of France, and the bubble of Rome; possest of all the superstition of a capuchin, and void of all the religion of a prince. Add to this, that there is no resource in his understanding. Men of the best sense find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are of all the strongest; but he is a slave to the weakest. The rod hangs, like the sword of Damocles, over his head, and he trembles before his mother and his priest.

These, reader, are the outlines of the PRETENDER's picture, equally applicable to father and son, which lord Bolingbroke sets before you: consider it attentively, and continue a Jacobite if you can, without renouncing your religion and your understanding too.

"The two brothers, says the noble author, CHARLES and JAMES, became infected with popery to such degrees, as their different characters admitted of. CHARLES had parts; and his good understanding served as an antidote to repel the poison. JAMES, the simplest man of his time, drank off the whole chalice. The poison met in his composition, with all the fear, all the credulity, and all the obstinacy of temper proper to increase its virulence, and to strengthen its effect.

The first had always a wrong bias upon him: he connived at the establishment, and indirectly contributed to the growth of that power, which afterwards disturbed the peace and threatned the liberty of Europe so often; but he went no further out of the way. The opposition of his parliaments, and his own reflexions, stopped him here. The prince and the people were indeed mutually jealous of one another, from whence much present disorder flowed, and the foundation of future evils was laid: but his good and his bad principles combating still together, he maintained, during a reign of more than twenty years, in some tolerable degree, the authority of the crown, and the flourishing estate of the nation.

The last, drunk with superstitious and even enthusiastic zeal, ran headlong into his own ruin, whilst he endeavoured to precipitate ours. His parliament and his people did all they could to save themselves by winning him; but all was vain: he had no principle on which they could take hold: even

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his good qualities worked againſt them; and his love of his country went halves with his bigotry. How he ſucceeded we have heard from our fathers. The revolution of one thouſand ſix hundred and eighty eight ſaved the nation, and ruined the king.

Now the preſent Pretender's education has rendered him infinitely leſs fit than his uncle, and at leaſt as unfit as his father, to be king of Great Britain. His religion is not founded on the love of virtue and the deteſtation of vice; on a ſenſe of that obedience which is due to the will of the Supreme Being, and a ſenſe of thoſe obligations which creatures formed to live in a mutual dependence on one another ly under. The ſpring of his whole conduct is fear: fear of the horns of the devil, and of the flames of hell. He has been taught to believe, that nothing but a blind ſubmiſſion to the church of Rome, and a ſtrict adherence to all the terms of that communion, can ſave him from theſe dangers. He has all the ſuperſtition of a capuchin, but I found on him no tincture of the religion of a prince.

Do not imagine that I looſe the reins to my imagination, or that I write what my reſentments dictate; I tell you ſimply my opinion. I have heard the ſame deſcription of his character made by thoſe who know him beſt: and I converſed with very few among the Roman Catholics themſelves, who did not think him too much a Papiſt. Add to this, that there is no reſource in his underſtanding. Men of the beſt ſenſe find it hard to overcome religious prejudices, which are, of all, the ſtrongeſt; but he is a ſlave to the weakeſt. The rod hangs, like the ſword of Damocles, over his head; and he trembles before his mother and his prieſt. What, in the name of God! can any member of the church of England promiſe himſelf from ſuch a character? are we, by another revolution, to return into the ſame ſtate from which we were delivered by the firſt? Let us take example from the Roman Catholics, who act very reaſonably in refuſing to ſubmit to a Proteſtant prince. Henry the fourth had at leaſt as good a title to the crown of France, as the Pretender has to ours. His religion alone ſtood in his way; and he had never been king if he had not removed that obſtacle.

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Considering the inveterate rancour among Christians, which I confess to be lamentable, can any thing be more absurd, than for those of one persuasion to trust the supreme power, or any part of it, to those of another? Particularly, must it not be reputed madness in those of our religion to trust themselves in the hands of Roman Catholics? must it not be reputed impudence in a Roman Catholic to expect that we should? He who looks upon us as heretics, as men in rebellion against a lawful, nay a divine authority, and whom it is therefore meritorious, by all sorts of ways, to reduce to obedience. There are many perhaps amongst them, who think more generously, and whose morals are not corrupted by that which is called religion: but this is the spirit of the priesthood, in whose scale that scrap of a parable, "Compel them to come in," which they apply as they please, outweighs the whole decalogue.

In a letter from the chevalier to me, the article of religion was so aukwardly handled, that he made the principal motive of the confidence we ought to have in him, to consist in his firm resolution to adhere to Popery. The effect which this epistle had on me was the same which it had on those Tories to whom I communicated it at that time; it made us resolve to have nothing to do with him.

Some time after this I was assured by several, and I make no doubt but others have been so too, that the chevalier at the bottom was not a bigot: that whilst he remained abroad, and could expect no succour, either present or future, from any princes but those of the Roman Catholic communion, it was prudent, whatever he might think, to make no demonstration of a design to change: but that his temper was such, and he was already so disposed, that we might depend on his compliance with what should be desired of him, if ever he came amongst us. To strengthen this opinion of his character, it was said that he had sent for a clergyman over to celebrate the church of England service in his family, and that he had promised to hear what this divine should represent on the subject of religion to him: but that minister soon experienced breach of promise; for he not only refused to hear him, but he sheltered the ignorance of his priests, or the badness

badneſs of his cauſe, or both, behind his authority; and abſolutely forbid all diſcourſe concerning religion.

When the draught of a declaration, and other papers which were to be diſperſed in Great Britain, came to be ſettled, the Pretender took exception againſt ſeveral paſſages; and particularly againſt thoſe wherein a direct promiſe of ſecuring the churches of England and Ireland was made. He was told, he ſaid, that he could not in conſcience make ſuch a promiſe: and the debate being kept up a little while, he aſked me with ſome warmth, why the Tories were ſo deſirous to have him, if they expected thoſe things from him which his religion did not allow? I left theſe draughts, by his order, with him, that he might conſider and amend them. I cannot ſay that he ſent them to the queen to be corrected by her confeſſor and the reſt of her council; but I firmly believe it. When they were digeſted in ſuch a manner as ſatisfied his caſuiſts, he made them be printed.

The whole tenor of the amendments was one continued inſtance of the groſſeſt bigotry; and the moſt material paſſages were turned with all the Jeſuitical prevarication imaginable.

In the clauſe which related to the churches of England and Ireland, there was a plain and direct promiſe inſerted of "effectual proviſion for their ſecurity; and for their re-"eſtabliſhment in all theſe rights which belong to them." This clauſe was not ſuffered to ſtand, but another was form'd, wherein all mention of the church of Ireland was omitted, and nothing was promiſed to the church of England, but "the ſecurity, and re-eſtabliſhment of all theſe "rights, privileges, immunities and poſſeſſions which be-"long to her," and wherein he had already promiſed, by his declaration, of 20th July, to ſecure and "protect all "her members."

I need make no comment on a proceeding ſo eaſy to be underſtood. The drift of theſe evaſions, and of this affected obſcurity is obvious enough, at leaſt it will appear ſo by the obſervations which remain to be made.

He was ſo afraid of admitting any words which might be conſtrued into a promiſe of his conſenting to thoſe things, which ſhould be found neceſſary for the preſent or future ſe-

curity of our conſtitution, that in a paragraph where he was made to ſay, that he thought himſelf obliged to be ſolicitous for the proſperity of the church of England, the word, Proſperity, was expunged; and we were left by this mental reſervation to gueſs what he was ſolicitous for. It could not be for her proſperity: that he had expunged. It muſt therefore be for her deſtruction, which, in his language, would have been ſtiled, her converſion.

Another remarkable proof of the ſame kind is to be found towards the concluſion of the declaration. After having ſpoke of the peace and flouriſhing eſtate of the kingdom, he was made to expreſs his readineſs to concert with the two houſes ſuch further meaſures, as ſhould be thought neceſſary for ſecuring the ſame to future generations. The deſign of this paragraph you ſee. He and his council ſaw it too; and therefore the word "ſecuring" was laid aſide, and the word "leaving" was inſerted in lieu of it.

One would imagine, that a declaration corrected in this manner might have been ſuffered to go abroad without any further precaution. But theſe papers had been penned by Proteſtants; and who could anſwer, that there might not be ſtill ground ſufficient, from the tenor of them, to inſiſt on every thing neceſſary for the ſecurity of that religion. The declaration of the 20th of July had been penned by a prieſt of the Scots college, and the expreſſions had been meaſured ſo as to ſuit perfectly with the conduct which the Chevalier intended to hold; ſo as to leave room to diſtinguiſh him, upon future occaſions, with the help of a little pious ſophiſtry, out of all the engagements which he ſeemed to take in it.

This orthodox paper was therefore to accompany the heretical paper into the world; and no promiſe of moment was to ſtand in the latter, unleſs qualified by a reference to the former. Thus the church was to be ſecured in the rights, &c. which belong to her. How? No otherwiſe than according to the declaration of the month of July. And what does that promiſe? Security and protection to the members of this church in the enjoyment of their property. I make no doubt but Bellarmine, if he had been the Chevalier's confeſſor, would have paſſed this paragraph thus amended. No engagement whatever taken in favour of the church of Ireland,

land, and a happy diſtinction found between ſecuring that of England, and protecting her members. Many an uſeful project for the deſtruction of Heretics, and for accumulating power and riches to the See of Rome, has been eſtabliſhed on a more ſlender foundation.

The ſame ſpirit reigns through the whole. Civil and religious rights are no otherwiſe to be confirmed, than in conformity to the declaration of July; nay, the general pardon is reſtrained and limited to the terms preſcribed therein.

This is the account which I judged too important to be omitted, and which I choſe to give you all together. I ſhall ſurely be juſtified at preſent in concluding, that the Tories are groſſly deluded in their opinion of this Prince's character; or elſe that they ſacrifice all, which ought to be eſteemed precious and ſacred among men, to their paſſions. In both theſe caſes I remain ſtill a Tory, and am true to the party. In the firſt, I endeavour to undeceive you by an experience purchaſed at my expence, and for your ſakes: in the ſecond, I endeavour to prevail on you to revert to that principle from which we have deviated. You never intended, whilſt I lived amongſt you, the ruin of your country; and yet every ſtep, which you now make towards the reſtoration you are ſo fond of, is a ſtep towards this ruin. No man of ſenſe well informed, can ever go into meaſures for it, unleſs he thinks himſelf and his country in ſuch deſperate circumſtances, that nothing is left them, but to chuſe of two ruins, that which they like beſt.

It may be ſaid, and it has been urged to me, that if the Chevalier was reſtored, the knowledge of his character would be our ſecurity; "habet fœnum in cornu:" there would be no pretence for truſting him, and, by conſequence, it would be eaſy to put ſuch reſtrictions on the exerciſe of the regal power, as might hinder him from invading or ſapping our religion and liberty. But this I utterly deny. Experience has ſhewn us, how ready men are to court power and profit; and who can determine, how far either the Tories or the Whigs would comply, in order to ſecure to themſelves the enjoyment of all the places in the kingdom?

Suppoſe, however, that a majority of true Iſraelites ſhould be found, whom no temptation could oblige to bow the knee

to Baal; in order to preſerve the government on one hand, muſt they not deſtroy it on the other? The neceſſary reſtrictions would in this caſe be ſo many, and ſo important, as to leave hardly the ſhadow of a monarchy, if he ſubmitted to them: and if he did not ſubmit to them, theſe patriots would have no reſource left but in rebellion. Thus, therefore, the affair would turn, if the Pretender was reſtored. We might, moſt probably, loſe our religion and liberty by the bigotry of the prince, and the corruption of the people. We ſhould have no chance of preſerving them, but by an entire change of the whole frame of our government, or by another revolution. What reaſonable man would voluntarily reduce himſelf to the neceſſity of making an option among ſuch melancholy alternatives?

The beſt which could be hoped for, were the Chevalier on the throne, would be, that a thread of favourable accidents, improved by the wiſdom and virtue of the parliament, might keep off the evil day during his reign. But ſtill the fatal cauſe would be eſtabliſhed, it would be entailed upon us, and every man would be apprifed, that ſooner or later the fatal effect muſt follow. Conſider a little, what a condition we ſhould be in, both with reſpect to our foreign intereſt and our domeſtic quiet, whilſt the reprieve laſted, whilſt the Chevalier or his ſucceſſors made no direct attack upon the conſtitution.

As to the firſt, it is true indeed that princes and ſtates are friends or foes to one another according as the motives of ambition drive them. Theſe are the firſt principles of union and diviſion amongſt them. The Proteſtant powers of Europe have joined, in our days, to ſupport and aggrandize the houſe of Auſtria; as they did, in the days of our forefathers, to defeat her deſigns, and to reduce her power: and the moſt Chriſtian king of France has more than once joined his councils, and his arms too, with the councils and arms of the moſt Mahometan emperor of Conſtantinople. But ſtill there is, and there muſt continue, as long as the influence of the Papal authority ſubſiſts in Europe, another general, permanent, and invariable diviſion of intereſts. The powers of earth, like thoſe of heaven, have two diſtinct motions. Each of them rolls in his own poli-

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tical orb; but each of them is hurried, at the ſame time round the great vortex of his religion. If this general notion be juſt, apply it to the preſent caſe. Whilſt a Roman Catholic holds the rudder, how can we expect to be ſteered in our proper courſe? His political intereſt will certainly incline him to direct our firſt motion right; but his miſtaken religious intereſt will render him incapable of doing it ſteadily.

As to the laſt, our domeſtic quiet; even whilſt the Chevalier, and thoſe of his race, concealed their game, we ſhould remain in the moſt unhappy ſtate which human nature is ſubject to, a ſtate of doubt and ſuſpenſe. Our preſervation would depend on making him the object of our eternal jealouſy, who, to render himſelf and his people happy, ought to be that of our entire confidence.

While the Pretender and his ſucceſſors forebore to attack the religion and liberty of the nation, we ſhould remain in the condition of thoſe people who labour under a broken conſtitution, or who carry about them ſome chronical diſtemper. They feel a little pain at every moment; or a certain uneaſineſs, which is ſometimes leſs tolerable than pain, hangs continually on them, and they languiſh in the conſtant expectation of dying perhaps in the ſevereſt torture.

But if the fear of hell ſhould diſſipate all other fears in the Pretender's mind, and carry him, which is frequently the effect of that paſſion, to the moſt deſperate undertakings; if, among his ſucceſſors, a man bold enough to make the attempt ſhould ariſe, the condition of the Britiſh nation would be ſtill more deplorable. The attempt ſucceeding, we ſhould fall into tyranny; for a change of religion could never be brought about by conſent; and the ſame force, that would be ſufficient to inſlave our conſciences, would be ſufficient for all the other purpoſes of arbitrary power. The attempt failing, we ſhould fall into anarchy; for there is no medium, when diſputes between a prince and his people are arrived at a certain point; he muſt either be ſubmitted to, or depoſed."

To theſe juſt reflexions on the deplorable ſtate of the nation, ſhould God for the puniſhment of our ſins, permit the PRETENDER to aſcend the Britiſh throne, it ſeems proper

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to add, from the ſame author, a few ſentences relative to the conduct of the French court, during the rebellion in one thouſand ſeven hundred and fifteen.

"As ſoon, ſays his lordſhip, as I received advice that the Chevalier was ſailed from Dunkirk, I renewed, I redoubled all my applications *with the French miniſtry*. I neglected no means, I forgot no argument which my underſtanding could ſuggeſt to me. They were very frank in declaring, that they could give us no money, and that they would give us no troops. Arms, ammunition, and connivance they made us hope for. The latter, in ſome degree, we might have had perhaps; but to what purpoſe was it to connive, when, by a multitude of little tricks, they avoided furniſhing us with arms and ammunition, and when they knew that we were utterly unable to furniſh ourſelves with them? Some of them were uneaſy to ſee the Pretender ſculking about in France, and to be told of it every hour by the earl of Stair. Others imagined, that he might do their buſineſs by going into Scotland, tho' he ſhould not do his own: that is, they flattered themſelves, that he might keep a war for ſome time alive, which would employ the whole attention of our government, and for the event of which they had very little concern. Unable from their natural temper as well as their habits, to be true to any principle, they thought and acted in this manner, whilſt they affected the greateſt friendſhip to the king *of Great Britain*, and whilſt they really did deſire to enter into new and more intimate engagements with him. Whilſt the Pretender continued in France, they could neither avow him, nor favour his cauſe: if once he ſet his foot on Scots ground, they gave hopes of indirect aſſiſtance: and if he could maintain himſelf in any corner of the iſland, they would look upon him, it was ſaid, as a king. This was their language to us. To the Britiſh miniſter they denied, they forſwore, they renounced; and yet the man of the beſt head in all their councils, being asked by Lord Stair, what they intended to do, anſwered before he was aware, that they pretended to be neuters."

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The above memorable paſſages are only a few of the many which the editor might have mentioned to the ſame purpoſe; but theſe, he flatters hinſelf, will be a ſufficient ſpecimen of the treachery of the French nation. They are the reſult of lord Bolingbroke's unfortunate experience, wrote to undeceive his friends, and to promote the union and quiet of his country. If this ſhall be their happy effect, his lordſhip will have made ſome atonement for paſt errors; and the editor will have gained his end.

He hopes the diſaffected part of his countrymen will, at laſt, learn the perfidy of France from the misfortune of others. He hopes, at leaſt, they will learn from their own recent experience, which has proved ſo fatal to many of them, that his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty has nothing leſs at heart, whatever attempts he may make againſt Britain, than the cauſe of the Pretender.—And this once admitted, what remains, if not loſt to all ſenſe of duty and intereſt, but to lay down the weapons of their rebellion, and demean themſelves loyal ſubjects under the BEST of KINGS, and the BEST of GOVERNMENTS?

'Tis preſumed they don't intend the RUIN of their COUNTRY, and therefore would do well to remember, what our author has juſtly obſerved, That every ſtep which they now make towards the reſtoration they are ſo fond of, is a ſtep towards this RUIN.